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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/829,144

04/21/2004

Anthony M. Mazany

GRCBP0317USA

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07/16/2008

DON W. BULSON (GRCO)
RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP
1621 EUCLID AVENUE
19TH FLOOR
CLEVELAND, OH 44115

EXAMINER

TUROC, DAVID P

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1792

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

07/16/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/829,144	Applicant(s) MAZANY ET AL.	
	Examiner DAVID TUROCY	Art Unit 1792	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 5/27/2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 and 8-56 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 28-56 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 and 8-27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>5/27/08</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Applicant's amendments, filed 5/27/2008, have been fully considered and reviewed by the examiner. The examiner notes the amendment to claim 1, and the subsequent cancellation of claims 5-7. Claims 1-4, 8-56 are pending in the instant application, with claims 28-56 withdrawn due to a restriction requirement.

Election/Restrictions

2. Applicant's affirmation of the election without traverse of claims 1-27 in the reply filed on 5/27/2008 is acknowledged.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed 5/27/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Applicant's arguments directed at the combination of Stover and Block are not persuasive. The applicant argued against the Block reference stating there is no suggestion of combine the teachings with Stover. However, initially, the examiner notes that suggestion to combine is only one test of obviousness. See *KSR Int'l Inc. v. Teleflex Inc.*, 127 S Ct. 1727, 1741, 82 USPQ2d 1385, 1396 (2007). Additionally, the

examiner notes that Stover discloses a method of including zinc salt and aluminum salt and Block discloses zinc and magnesium salts provide carbon composites that are especially resistant to oxidation at elevated temperatures. Therefore, taking the references collectively, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified Stover, to utilize magnesium salt, particularly magnesium nitrate, with a reasonable expectation of predictably providing a carbon-carbon composite that has oxidation resistance. A predictable use of prior art elements according to their established functions to achieve a predictable result is prima facie obvious. See *KSR Int'l Inc. v. Teleflex Inc.*, 127 S Ct. 1727, 1741, 82 USPQ2d 1385, 1396 (2007).

Additionally, as evidenced by Block at Table I, magnesium nitrate is a known substitute for oxidation resistance with zinc chloride or zinc nitrate, and the claim would have been obvious because the substitution of one known element for another would have yielded predictable results to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention.

All other arguments are directed at newly added limitations and are therefore deemed moot and addressed in the prior art rejection below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1 – 4, 14 – 23, 25, and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Stover (United States Patent 5,759,622).

6. Regarding Claim 1, Stover teaches a method of inhibiting oxidation of a porous carbon-carbon composite (see Column 13, lines 37 – 40) comprising the steps of: (a) contacting the carbon—carbon composite with an oxidation inhibiting composition (see Column 13, lines 38 – 40) comprising phosphoric acid, at least one aluminum salt, and at least one additional metal salt (zinc salt; see Column 13, lines 42 – 44), the oxidation inhibiting composition penetrating at least some of the pores of the carbon-carbon composite (see Column 13, lines 40, 41, 45, and 46); and (b) heating the carbon-carbon composite at a temperature sufficient to form a deposit from the oxidation inhibiting composition within at least some of the penetrated pores of the carbon-carbon composite (see Column 13, lines 44 – 47). Stover discloses the metal salt can be any zinc salt, including zinc chloride, zinc nitrate, and zinc phosphate (Column 3, lines 55-60).

7. Regarding Claims 2, 3 and 26, Stover teaches the method wherein the metal to phosphate atomic ratio for the oxidation inhibiting composition is adjusted to be about 0.35 by adding a metal salt to the oxidation inhibiting composition (see n Column 7, lines 15 – 20). Stover discloses the metal salt can be either zinc phosphate or zinc chloride. See Example 3, which clearly discloses zinc salt in a proportion as claimed, as discussed in the office action dated 2/26/2008. Additionally, see Column 3, lines 50-60, discussing an aluminum salt to zinc salt in a ratio of 2 to 1.

8. Regarding Claim 4, Stover teaches the method wherein the oxidation inhibiting composition further comprises water (see again Column 7, lines 15 – 20).
9. Regarding Claims 14 and 15, Stover teaches the method wherein the aluminum salt comprises mono-aluminum phosphate (see previous citations).
10. Regarding Claims 16 and 17, Stover teaches the method wherein the oxidation inhibiting composition further comprises a wetting agent that comprises a polysiloxane (see Column 4, lines 9 – 62; Column 7, lines 53 – 56; and Column 13, lines 37 – 43 and line 63).
11. Regarding Claim 18, Stover teaches the method wherein the oxidation that is inhibited is a catalyzed oxidation (see again Column 1, lines 37 and 38).
12. Regarding Claim 19, Stover teaches the method wherein the composite is heated during step (b) at a temperature in the range of about 640 to about 900 C (see Column 13, lines 48 – 51).
13. Regarding Claims 20 – 22, Stover teaches the method wherein a barrier coating is applied to at least one surface of the carbon-carbon composite prior to step (a), and wherein the barrier coating comprises silicon carbide (see Column 14, lines 1 – 4).
14. Regarding Claim 23, Stover teaches the method wherein the barrier coating is applied to the carbon-carbon composite using chemical vapor deposition (see Column 14, lines 5 and 6).
15. Regarding Claim 25, Stover teaches the method wherein the depth of penetration of the oxidation inhibiting composition into the pores of the carbon-carbon composite is about 4 mm (see Column 12, lines 20 – 22).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

16. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

17. Claims 2-3, 26-27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stover.

18. Claim 2, 3, and 26: While the examiner maintains the position of above, that the ratio of the components are taught by Stover, the examiner notes that Stover discloses ranges for Zinc salt to Aluminum salt (column 50-60), and In the case where the claimed ranges “overlap or lie” inside ranges disclosed by prior art a *prima facie* case of obviousness exists. *In re Wertheim*, 541 F.2d 257 191 USPQ 90. See MPEP 2144.05. Alternatively, It is the examiners position that the amount of each component are known result effective variables. If the amount of zinc or aluminum is too low or too low it would result in improper oxidation resistance. Therefore it would have been obvious to one skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to determine the optimal value for the the zinc to aluminum ratio, including within the rance as claimed used in the process of Stover, through routine experimentation, to impart the carbon-carbon composite with the desired properties associated oxidation resistance.

19. Regarding Claim 27, Stover does not explicitly teach the method wherein the metal to phosphate atomic ratio for the oxidation inhibiting composition is adjusted to be in the range of about 0.26 to about 0.50 by adding a metal nitrate or a metal halide to the oxidation inhibiting composition. However, as discussed for Claims 2 and 26 above, Stover does teach the analogous method wherein the metal salt is a metal phosphate. Furthermore, Stover teaches, in Column 13, lines 53 – 55, that "the zinc salt is selected from the group consisting of a zinc halide, a zinc nitrate, a zinc phosphate, and a mixture thereof." Note that by replacing zinc phosphate dihydrate with a zinc halide or zinc nitrate, assuming a desire to have the same amount of zinc by mol in the composition, the elimination of the phosphate from the zinc salt still results in an atomic ratio of metal to phosphate of approximately 0.4, within the range of about 0.26 to about 0.50. It has been held that, in the case where the claimed ranges "overlap or lie inside ranges disclosed by the prior art", a *prima facie* case of obviousness exists. *In re Wertheim*, 541 F.2d 257, 191 USPQ 90 (CCPA 1976); *In re Woodruff*, 919 F.2d 1575, 16 USPQ2d 1934 (Fed. Cir. 1990). Alternatively, if the 12 parts by weight of zinc phosphate dehydrate were instead replaced with 12 parts by weight of zinc nitrate, the metal to phosphate atomic ratio would be 0.35, still rendering the claimed range *prima facie* obvious. Moreover, it has been held that, "Where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, it is not inventive to discover the optimum or workable ranges by routine experimentation." *In re Aller*, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the present invention to have modified the method taught by Stover in

Examples 3 and 9 by utilizing a zinc salt that is a zinc halide or a zinc nitrate as also taught by Stover to have achieved the same or a similar metal to phosphate atomic ratio as taught in Examples 3 and 9 of Stover, because Stover teaches that the zinc salt employed may be either a zinc nitrate, a zinc halide, or a zinc phosphate, and because Stover teaches the general conditions of such a method.

20. Claims 8 -13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stover in view of Block (United States Patent 4,454,193).

21. Regarding Claims 8, 11, and 12, Stover does not teach the method wherein the additional metal salt comprises an alkaline earth metal salt which comprises magnesium nitrate. Block teaches, in Column 9, lines 21 – 36, “a method for inhibiting the oxidation of a carbon body which comprises: (a) impregnating a porous carbon body with a solution of a metal salt ... (b) curing said impregnated carbon body ... and (c) calcining said cured carbon body ... wherein said cured carbon body is calcined at a temperature of from about 700 to about 950 C.” Furthermore, Block teaches, in Column 5, lines 56 – 61, that “zinc and magnesium salts provide carbon composites that are especially resistant to oxidation at elevated temperatures. Thus, zinc and magnesium are even more preferred multi-valent cations. The most preferred salts for preparing the carbon composites of this invention are the magnesium salts.” Finally, Block also teaches, in Column 6, lines 3 – 6, that magnesium nitrate is a preferred such salt. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the present invention to have modified the method taught by Stover by employing an additional

metal salt that comprises magnesium nitrate in place of the zinc salt taught by Stover with a reasonable expectation of success, because Block teaches that zinc and magnesium salts are especially resistant to oxidation at elevated temperatures.

22. Regarding Claims 9 and 10, Stover in view of Block does not teach the method wherein the additional metal salt comprises magnesium phosphate. However, as discussed above, Stover teaches the method wherein the additional metal salt is zinc phosphate dihydrate, and Block teaches that zinc and magnesium salts provide carbon composites that are especially resistant to oxidation at elevated temperatures.

Furthermore, Stover teaches, in Column 3, lines 58 – 61, that the zinc salt may be any zinc salt capable of forming zinc phosphate upon heating. Examples of zinc salts include zinc halides, ... zinc nitrate, zinc phosphate, and mixtures thereof." Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the present invention to have modified the method taught by Stover in view of Block by employing an additional metal salt that is a magnesium phosphate with a reasonable expectation of success, because Stover teaches that metal salts that are zinc nitrates, zinc halides, and/or zinc phosphates are known, and because Block teaches that zinc and magnesium salts both provide carbon composites that are especially resistant to oxidation at elevated temperatures.

23. Regarding Claim 13, Stover in view of Block does not explicitly teach the method wherein the additional metal salt comprises (i) magnesium phosphate, and (ii) a magnesium nitrate. However, as discussed, Stover in view of Block teaches that the

additional metal salt may be a magnesium nitrate or a magnesium phosphate. Further, as discussed, Stover explicitly teaches that the "zinc salt may be any zinc salt capable of forming zinc phosphate upon heating. Examples of zinc salts include ... zinc nitrate, zinc phosphate, and mixtures thereof." Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the present invention to have modified the method taught by Stover in view of Block by employing an additional metal salt that comprises a combination of magnesium phosphate and magnesium nitrate with a reasonable expectation of success, because Stover teaches that combinations of different salts of the additional metal compound may successfully be used in such methods.

24. Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Stover in view of Galasso, et al. (United States Patent 4,425,407, hereafter Galasso).

25. Regarding this Claim, Stover does not teach the method wherein the barrier coating is formed by reacting the carbon-carbon composite with molten silicon. Galasso teaches, in Column 2, lines 56 – 64, that "carbon-carbon composites may be protected from oxidation by converting the surface of the material to an oxidation resistant material. One commonly used family of coating processes utilizes silicon to convert the surface of carbon-base materials to silicon carbide. For example, the carbon-carbon composite material may be dipped in or otherwise contacted with molten silicon or exposed to silicon vapor to cause the surface of the material to converted to silicon carbide." Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at

the time of the present invention to have modified the method taught by Stover by forming the silicon carbide barrier coating by reacting the carbon-carbon composite with molten silicon as taught by Galasso, because Galasso teaches that such a method of forming a silicon carbide coating on a carbon-carbon composite is well known in the art.

Conclusion

26. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DAVID TUROCY whose telephone number is (571)272-2940. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8:30-6:00, No 2nd Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Timothy Meeks can be reached on (571) 272-1423. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/David Turocy/
Examiner, Art Unit 1792

/Timothy H Meeks/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1792